



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[EPA-HQ-OGC-2023-0349; FRL-11156-01-OGC]

Proposed Consent Decree, Clean Air Act Citizen Suit

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice of proposed consent decree; request for public comment.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Clean Air Act, as amended (CAA or the Act), notice is given of a proposed consent decree in *Sierra Club v. U.S. EPA, et al.*, No. 3:23-cv-00780-TLT. On February 22, 2023, Plaintiff Sierra Club filed a complaint in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California Oakland Division, alleging that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA or the Agency) failed to perform certain non-discretionary duties in accordance with the Act to promulgate a Federal implementation plan (FIP) within two years of finding that Texas failed to submit a state implementation plan (SIP) for the Rusk/Panola 2010 SO₂ National Ambient Air Quality Standard (SO₂ NAAQS) nonattainment area. EPA is providing notice of this proposed consent decree, which would resolve all claims in the case by establishing a deadline for EPA to take final action as specified in the decree.

DATES: Written comments on the proposed consent decree must be received by **[INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

ADDRESSES: Submit your comments, identified by Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OGC-2023-0349, online at <https://www.regulations.gov> (EPA's preferred method). Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.

Instructions: All submissions received must include the Docket ID number for this action.

Comments received may be posted without change to <https://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information provided. For detailed instructions on sending comments and additional information on the rulemaking process, see the "Additional Information about Commenting on the Proposed Consent Decree" heading under the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION**

section of this document.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Hali Kerr, Air and Radiation Law Office, Office of General Counsel, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; telephone (202) 564-2286; email address Kerr.Hali@epa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Obtaining a Copy of the Proposed Consent Decree

The official public docket for this action (identified by Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OGC-2023-0349) contains a copy of the proposed consent decree. The official public docket is available for public viewing at the Office of Environmental Information (OEI) Docket in the EPA Docket Center, EPA West, Room 3334, 1301 Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, DC. The EPA Docket Center Public Reading Room is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. The telephone number for the Public Reading Room is (202)566-1744 and the telephone number for the OEI Docket is (202)566-1752.

The electronic version of the public docket for this action contains a copy of the proposed consent decree and is available through <https://www.regulations.gov>. You may use <https://www.regulations.gov> to submit or view public comments, access the index listing of the contents of the official public docket, and access those documents in the public docket that are available electronically. Once in the system, key in the appropriate docket identification number then select “search.”

II. Additional Information about the Proposed Consent Decree

On December 13, 2016, the EPA designated portions of Rusk and Panola Counties, Texas as a “nonattainment” area for the 2010 SO₂ NAAQS (effective January 12, 2017). 81 FR 89870. The CAA required the State of Texas to submit a SIP within 18 months of the effective date of the designation that would provide pollution reductions necessary for the Rusk-Panola nonattainment area to attain the SO₂ NAAQS. Texas did not submit a SIP by the 18-month deadline. On August 10, 2020, the EPA issued a statutorily required Finding of Failure to

Submit a SIP for the nonattainment area; this created a duty for the EPA to promulgate a FIP for the nonattainment area unless EPA takes final action approving a corrective SIP from the State within two years of the effective date of the Finding of Failure to Submit (by September 9, 2022). Texas did not obtain approval of a corrective SIP by September 9, 2022.

On February 22, 2023, Plaintiff Sierra Club filed a complaint in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California Oakland Division, alleging that the EPA failed to promulgate a FIP within two years of finding that Texas failed to submit a SIP for the Rusk/Panola 2010 SO₂ NAAQS nonattainment area.¹

The proposed consent decree would establish a deadline of December 13, 2024 for EPA to take final action promulgating a FIP for the nonattainment area unless the EPA approves a corrective SIP for the area satisfying the requirements of CAA section 172(c), 42 U.S.C. 7502(c), before that deadline.

In accordance with section 113(g) of the CAA, for a period of thirty (30) days following the date of publication of this document, the Agency will accept written comments relating to the proposed consent decree. EPA or the Department of Justice may withdraw or withhold consent to the proposed consent decree if the comments disclose facts or considerations that indicate that such consent is inappropriate, improper, inadequate, or inconsistent with the requirements of the Act.

III. Additional Information about Commenting on the Proposed Consent Decree

Submit your comments, identified by Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OGC-2023-0349, via <https://www.regulations.gov>. Once submitted, comments cannot be edited or removed from this docket. EPA may publish any comment received to its public docket. Do not submit to EPA's docket at <https://www.regulations.gov> any information you consider to be Confidential Business Information (CBI) or other information whose disclosure is restricted by statute. Multimedia

¹ On February 28, 2022, the State of Texas submitted a SIP for the nonattainment area; this SIP is currently being reviewed by the EPA.

submissions (audio, video, etc.) must be accompanied by a written comment. The written comment is considered the official comment and should include discussion of all points you wish to make. EPA will generally not consider comments or comment contents located outside of the primary submission (i.e. on the web, cloud, or other file sharing system). For additional submission methods, the full EPA public comment policy, information about CBI or multimedia submissions, and general guidance on making effective comments, please visit <https://www.epa.gov/dockets/commenting-epa-dockets>. For additional information about submitting information identified as CBI, please contact the person listed in the **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** section of this document. Note that written comments containing CBI and submitted by mail may be delayed and deliveries or couriers will be received by scheduled appointment only.

If you submit an electronic comment, EPA recommends that you include your name, mailing address, and an e-mail address or other contact information in the body of your comment. This ensures that you can be identified as the submitter of the comment and allows EPA to contact you in case EPA cannot read your comment due to technical difficulties or needs further information on the substance of your comment. Any identifying or contact information provided in the body of a comment will be included as part of the comment that is placed in the official public docket and made available in EPA's electronic public docket. If EPA cannot read your comment due to technical difficulties and cannot contact you for clarification, EPA may not be able to consider your comment.

Use of the <https://www.regulations.gov> website to submit comments to EPA electronically is EPA's preferred method for receiving comments. The electronic public docket system is an "anonymous access" system, which means EPA will not know your identity, e-mail address, or other contact information unless you provide it in the body of your comment.

Please ensure that your comments are submitted within the specified comment period. Comments received after the close of the comment period will be marked "late." EPA is not

required to consider these late comments.

Gautam Srinivasan,
Associate General Counsel.

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